

Village Innovation Builds Amid the Covid-19 Pandemic Through the Program Merdeka in Sumbawa Regency

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to describe the innovation of developing villages amid the Covid 19 pandemic through the program Merdeka in the Sumbawa district. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The conclusions of this study are 1). The realization of the main program targets for the program Merdeka as reflected in the realization of the indicators for the program Merdeka targets has been running perfectly, there is only one main program for independence that needs to be an improvement in the next program Merdeka, namely the cultural village. This is because the new habit of introducing the concept of a building village will inevitably clash with the cultural customs of the local village community. 2) Village Innovation. Building an independent community amid the COVID-19 pandemic through the program Merdeka in 19 fostered villages in Sumbawa Regency has significantly impacted social, economic, and village characteristics. In the social field, the community is more aware of the impact of the use of the introduction of technology during the implementation of the program Merdeka. Then for the impact on the economy, with the implementation of the program Merdeka, the village community can recognize and explore the potential of the village in improving community welfare. As well as changes in village characteristics, that 17 villages have experienced progress, the remaining two villages have experienced independent villages. This is also due to the combination of natural resources, human resources, institutional resources, and stakeholders involved in it jointly. Then it is supported by the participation of the local village community who are serious about advancing their village.

KEYWORDS: Village Innovation Build in the Covid-19 Period

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the announcement of positive cases of COVID-19 infection in Indonesia on March 2, 2020, various anticipatory steps have been taken to minimize the spread of COVID-19, including physical-distancing appeals, implementing work from home, closing shopping centers and tourist attractions, and reducing worker density in the industrial sector. However, the spread of COVID-19 is continuing. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has an impact on economic activities, especially economic activities in rural areas which will disrupt the increase in village potential. To accelerate the development of village potential during the Covid-19 period, the Indonesian government carried out the mandate of Law No. 6/2014 concerning Villages with the allocation of village funds from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBN) whose numbers continue to increase from year to year. In 2015 the number of village funds was Rp. 20.8 trillion, in 2016 Rp. 46.8 trillion, in 2017 Rp. 60 trillion, in 2018 Rp. 111 trillion, and in 2019 it reached Rp. 113 trillion. With this large amount of funds, the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration (Kemendes PDTT) have announced the realization of 2,000 independent villages by the end of 2019 [16].

The problem in developing village potential lies in the weakness in doing business due to limited facilities and infrastructure. Moreover, access in the economic sector makes the poor increasingly left behind with people who have access and higher potential. According to Janianton Damanik [11], poverty is one of the most important development indicators. How advanced and successful development will be seen from the

significant changes in the magnitude of poverty itself. That is why the government has a very fundamental interest in overcoming poverty. The problem of poverty is a classic problem when talking about villages, this is because the development approach used so far has made rural communities not experience significant progress [10]. This is indicated by the non-optimal economic organization in the village. These organizations such as village credit institutions, village cooperatives, and granary hamlets. The village economic organization should be able to grow strong from the bottom, be able to survive, and develop itself well. Almost all economic organizations in these villages are relatively fragile. This fragility is thought to be one of the serious reasons why the life and economy of rural communities are getting underdeveloped and weakened [10].

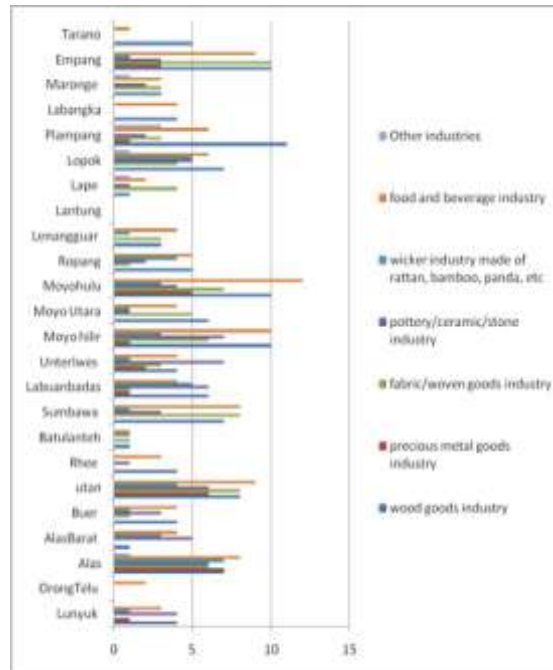
One of the concepts for tackling poverty in the village is in the form of carrying out sustainable innovations in building an independent village, then several significant steps are needed including the use of village resources, involvement of all levels of society, and political support in developing the village. This is as stated by Rahardjo Adisasmita [1] that in the development of a region, several important factors need to be considered, namely the first use of natural resources and potential sectors in a productive, efficient and effective manner. Second, the development of infrastructure and development facilities equally to all parts of the region. Third, increasing the capacity of human resources as people of development. Fourth, the arrangement and utilization of development spatial planning optimally. Therefore we need the right strategy in development for the realization of an independent region. Several alternatives can be taken to realize an independent village as a manifestation of Law no. 6/2014 on Villages, namely first, to carry out a mapping of village potentials and market networks that can be managed to become a source of village economy and community economy. Second, apply the method of coaching and mentoring or direct assistance to accelerate development in the socio-cultural aspect, strengthening the village government's capacity and structuring the village government's administration. Third, build synergy between village development planning and regional planning, and national planning. Fourth, building village governance into a modern organization based on village culture [16].

Therefore, to support the significant steps above as well as strategies in forming independent

village innovations, a sustainable program such as the independence program is needed. The program Merdeka is a program that aims to build villages for the welfare of the community. This program is a concrete implementation of the direction of the new curriculum which is currently being initiated under the name Campus Merdeka by the Minister of Education and Culture on January 24, 2020. This curriculum has four policy packages as its foundation, one of which is the right to study for three semesters outside of the study program (study program) for students. This opportunity was then tried to be implemented in the form of the Merdeka program (Let's Together Build Our Village) which was carried out for one semester, students would go directly to villages in Sumbawa Regency. The villages that were targeted as target villages in the program Merdeka consisted of 19 villages in Sumbawa Regency, namely Lito Village, Semamung Village, Batu Tering Village, Margakarya Village, Sebasang Village, Batu Bulan Village, Lamenta Village, Jotang Village, Usar Village, Teluk Village Santong, Bungin Village, Luar Village, Labu Burung Village, Pulau Kaung Village, Tarusa Village, Leseng Village, Boal Village, Selante Village and Perung Village.

The selection of the assisted villages is based on the level of participation of the village government in developing the village. As for the implementation of the program merdMerdeka2020, the allocation of grant funds disbursed from Stakeholders through the Sumbawa University of Technology in the form of Regional Incentive Funds (DID) of Rp. 777,945,8000, allocated a budget of Rp. 40,925,500 to 18 villages, one village received as much as Rp. 41,286,800,-. With the disbursement of these funds, it is hoped that it will lift villages that were previously independent into independent villages by utilizing the potential of existing villages. The target indicators for the implementation of this program Merdeka are the achievement of One Village One Product, the establishment of a tourist village, the implementation of a digital village as well as a neat administrative village, and a cultural village. As an initial description of the potential of villages in Sumbawa Regency, the following initial data describes 24 sub-districts in Sumbawa Regency consisting of 157 villages, 8 sub-districts and 1 UPT. Reliable raw material resources in building potential, especially in the perspective of One Village One Product. As illustrated in the following table:

Table 1.1 Number of villages/kelurahan according to the presence of micro and small industries based on main raw materials, 2019.



Source: BPS. Sumbawa Regency_Statistics of Sumbawa Regency Village Potential

From table 1.1 above, it can be explained that the existence of small and medium business industries in 24 sub-districts of Sumbawa Regency has a significant impact on the economic development of the village, we can see one example of this is the food and beverage industry and comfortable businesses that dominate the existing MSMEs in the Regency. Sumbawa, ranging from 13 villages from 24 sub-districts that focus on food and beverage businesses or shrines and 11 villages from 24 sub-districts that focus on business made from woven rattan. As for the types of small and medium enterprises that still need to be developed and targeted to advance the village into an independent village, such as the industrial business of precious metals, woven fabrics, pottery, and other industries. Therefore, through the program Merdeka activities involving 19 fostered villages in Sumbawa Regency, the theme of developing villages for the welfare of the community with 5 target programs is the achievement of One Village One Product, the establishment of a tourist village, the implementation of a digital village as well as a neat administrative village and a cultural village. The hope from the implementation of this program merdeka is the realization of sustainable independent village innovations in the Sumbawa Regency.

Thus, related to the above background, the purpose of this research is to describe the implementation of the target indicators for the program merdeka in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic in 19 fostered villages as an effort to form independent villages in Sumbawa Regency such as the Implementation of One Village One Product, Tourism Village, Cultural Village as well as digital villages and neat administrative villages as well as independent building village innovations in the midst of the covid 19 pandemic through the program Merdeka in 19 fostered villages in Sumbawa Regency.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

a) Independent Village

Independent villages are the highest village status among the other four statuses, where independent villages have an increasing level of community welfare and a low amount of poverty. In general, villages that are far from the center of government have a high level of poverty. Therefore we need the right strategy in development for the realization of an independent region. Several alternatives can be taken to realize an independent village as a manifestation of Law no. 6/2014 on Villages, namely first, to carry out a mapping of village potentials and market networks that can be managed to become a source of village economy

and community economy. Second, apply the method of coaching and mentoring or direct assistance to accelerate development in the socio-cultural aspect, strengthening the village government's capacity and structuring the village government's administration. Third, build synergy between village development planning and regional planning, and national planning. Fourth, building village governance into a modern organization based on village culture [16].

If a strategy in development is successfully implemented, it will have an impact on the development growth of various sectors in it. To see how successful development is, it is necessary to have benchmarks from the indicators that have been set. According to the Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration of the Republic of Indonesia No. 2 of 2016 concerning the Building Village Index describes the Building Village Index (IDM) to realize an independent village. A village can be said to be an independent village if it has three indices in it, namely the social resilience index, economic resilience, and ecological resilience. Each of these indexes has its dimensions and indicators (Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration of the Republic of Indonesia Number 2 of 2016 concerning the Village Building Index).

b) Program Merdeka

The Merdeka Program is a concrete implementation of the direction of the new

curriculum which is currently being initiated under the name Campus Merdeka by the Minister of Education and Culture on January 24, 2020. This curriculum has four policy packages as its foundation, one of which is the right to study for three semesters outside the study program for students. The program Merdeka that is the focus of this research is the thematic village development program/KKN.

c) Village Build

Village building is the spirit of Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. The Village Law places the village as the subject of development. The supra-village government is the party that facilitates the growth and development of village independence and welfare through a policy scheme that prioritizes recognition and subsidiarity. The village supra-village need not be afraid of the consequences of applying these two principles. By becoming the subject of development, the village will no longer be an entity that complicates the main tasks of the district, provincial, and even central governments. Instead, the village will become a state entity that has the potential to bring the role of the state closer in building the welfare, prosperity, and sovereignty of the nation both in the eyes of its citizens and other countries. The following table 2.1 attempts to present a complete and systematic description of the differences between rural development (building a village) which is the domain of the government and village development (village building).

Table 2.1 Differences in the concepts of “Developing a Village” (rural development) and “Developing Village” (village development)

Item/Issue	Building a village (rural development)	Village Build (village development)
Entrance	Rural	Village
Approach	Functional	Locus
Level	Rural development	Local development
Related issues and concepts	Rural-urban linkage, market, growth, employment, infrastructure, region, sectoral, etc.	Independence, Local Wisdom, Social capital, democracy, participation, authority, allocation of funds, local movement,

		empowerment, etc.
Level, scale, and scope.	A cross-village spatial and economic area.	Within reach of Village scale and jurisdiction.
Institutional scheme.	The local government carries out planning and implementation supported by the allocation of special funds. Center performs facilitation, supervision, and acceleration.	Regulations establish village-scale authority, institutionalize village planning, fund allocation, and local control.
Authority	Village government	Village Government (Village Government And Community)
Destination	Reducing backwardness, backwardness, poverty, while building prosperity.	1. Making the village the basis of livelihood and community life in a sustainable manner. 2. Making the village the front end that is close to the community, as well as an independent village.
The Role of Local Government	Plan, finance, and implement	Facilitation, supervision, and development of village capacity.
Village Role.	Participate in planning and decision-making.	As the main actor who plans, finances and implements.
Results	1. Better	1. The

cross-village infrastructure. 2. The growth of small towns as growth centers and liaisons for rural-urban economic transactions. 3. Establ ishment of forest areas, collective farming, industry, tourism, etc.	village government is at the forefront of providing public services for citizens. 2. One village has a superior economic product (one village one product).
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Source: Independent Village, Developing Village. Borni Kurniawan [4]

III. METHODS

This research is a type of field qualitative research, according to Moleong, [8] defining qualitative methods as research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. So this research was conducted by describing the implementation of the target indicators for the program Merdekaamid the Covid-19 pandemic in 19 fostered villages as an effort to form independent villages in Sumbawa Regency such as the Implementation of One Village One Product, Tourism Village, Cultural Village and Digital Village and Administrative Tidy Village as well as The Innovation of Developing Independent Villages amid the COVID-19 pandemic through the program Merdeka in 19 fostered villages in Sumbawa Regency. Research with a qualitative approach emphasizes the analysis of the process of inductive inference and analysis of the dynamics of the relationship/relationship pattern between the observed phenomena using the scientific method.

Interviewees And Data collection technique

The sampling technique used in this research is purposive sampling. As stated by Sugiyono [15] purposive sampling is a sampling technique with certain considerations. In this study, the subjects who will be interviewed as key informants include 19 Village Heads in 19 assisted villages of Sumbawa Regency and 19 community leaders in 19 assisted villages of Sumbawa Regency. The data collection techniques in this

study were carried out by Interview, Observation, and Documentation

Data Validation

According to Moleong [8], "Triangulation is a technique for checking the validity of data that utilizes something other than the data for checking purposes or as a comparison against the data". To validate the data, researchers used data triangulation and method triangulation. Where data triangulation is used to collect similar data using a variety of different data sources. While the triangulation method is used to compare the data from interviews, namely comparing what is in the document with the results of observations and comparing the results of interviews with the contents of related documents.

Data Analysis

To support the analysis of the data used in the study, the researcher used the income of HB Sutopo [7] who quoted the opinion of Miles & Huberman: "There are three main components that researchers must understand, namely (1) data reduction, (2) display data, (3) decision making or verification.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Implementation of the Program Merdeka target indicators amid the Covid-19 Pandemic in 19 Assisted Villages as an Effort to Establish Independent Villages in Sumbawa Regency.

To achieve the target targets in the implementation of the program Merdeka, the

indicators used are the implementation of the main programs of the program Merdeka such as One Village One Product, Tourism Village, Cultural Village, Digital Village, and Administrative Tidy Village. In the implementation of the main program of the program Merdeka in 19 assisted villages in Sumbawa Regency. From the findings in the field, it was found that between the target and the realization of the main program the program Merdeka had been running 100%, it's just that the cultural village was only realized as much as 52.6%. This is because the local village culture is still very strong with grandmother's culture. ancestors, to introduce new habits in advancing the village has not run optimally.

Based on the initial presentation of the findings above, it can be concluded that the realization of the main program targets for the program Merdeka has been running perfectly, only one main program for the program Merdeka needs to be improved in the second phase of the program Merdeka, namely the cultural village. On the one hand, to advance the village by introducing new habits and new concepts in the community socially will inevitably collide with the customs of the previous community, and this requires a long time to change a habit. Because to advance the village is not in terms of strengthening economic capital but also in terms of strengthening social capital as stated by DeMassis et al., [5] that more specifically based on resource-based view theory, competitive advantage is determined by social capital, human capital, and social capital. Financial capital. Social capital is related to the relationship between people within the organization (internal social capital) and between the organization and outsiders (external social capital).

The achievement of the targets for the main indicators of the program Merdeka in the 19 assisted villages above is also supported by

derivative indicators that aim to see in more detail the development of the village. This is based on the village process building effectively to explore the potential of villages in Sumbawa Regency so that the implementation of the program Merdeka with its five main indicators can produce optimal results in its implementation. The derivative indicators are:

- a) Village economy, its derivative indicators are Number of MSMEs, Community Income, Digitizing the village economy, BUMDES Productivity, and Product Marketing.
- b) Socio-cultural derived indicators in the form of Number of community activities, socio-cultural innovation, and media-savvy human resources.
- c) Village Potential, its derivative indicators are Number of village potential, Innovation in managing village potential, Number of products from village potential, and Sustainability of managing potential.
- d) Village administration, its derivative indicators are The use of technology in administration, the number of human resources who understand the technology, and the village administration database.

From the series of indicators derived from the main program for the program Merdeka above, it is explained that the process will be achieved in less than six months during the implementation of the program Merdeka in 19 assisted villages in Sumbawa Regency. Then from the process of achieving the target indicators for the derivative of the program Merdeka, the village has the potential to become an independent village or not. The results of the achievement of the indicators derived from the program Merdeka in 19 fostered institutions in Sumbawa Regency can be seen in Table 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1 Results of Achievement of Program Merdeka Derivative Indicators

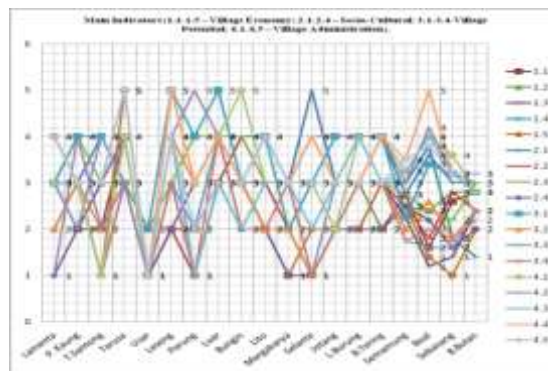


Figure 4.1 describes the implementation of the program Merdeka in Sumbawa Regency in 19 assisted villages for six months in 2020 resulting in significant achievements, this can be seen from the results of interviews with respondents in the assisted villages. For the 19 assisted villages, 7 assisted villages have a score of 5 in producing advanced villages to explore village potential including Tarusa Village, Leseng Village, Perung Village, Luar Village, Bungie Village, Selante Village, and Boal Village. This is due to the utilization of village potential that involves human resources in participation in developing the village so that the village is advanced even though there are a small number of derivative indicators that are still scored 1 and 2 this is because the potential of the existing village has not been utilized. This is due to limited resources. skilled human.

Then villages that have a score of 3 and 4 in the implementation of the program Merdeka as measured by the derivative indicators of the program Merdeka indicate that even village development after the independence program has been implemented has resulted in developing and advanced villages. This is due to the development of village potential which is accompanied by the role of community participation in developing villages through the program Merdeka, which is very active and enthusiastic. As it is known that one of the driving forces for the progress of a village is caused by the participation of the community in developing village participation, this is what makes the village a developed village and an independent village. This as stated by Mardikanto [9] is a process when citizens, as individuals as well as social groups and organizations, take part and influence the process of planning, implementing, and monitoring policies that directly affect their lives. So it can be concluded that to implement village development, one of the important factors that support this in addition to the abundant potential of the village is the level of active community participation. Then there are several other reasons why community participation has a very important nature. The first reason is that community participation is a tool to obtain information about the conditions, needs, and attitudes of the community, without the presence of development programs and projects will fail. The second reason is that the community will trust a development project or program more if they feel involved in the preparation and planning process because they will know the ins and outs of the project and will have a sense of ownership of the project. The third reason that encourages public participation in many countries is that there is an

assumption that it is a democratic right when people are involved in the development of their society.

B. Village Innovation to Build Independent amid the COVID-19 pandemic through the program Merdeka in 19 fostered villages in Sumbawa Regency.

The program Merdeka implemented in 19 villages in Sumbawa Regency has significantly impacted village social and economic changes. One of them is in the social field, namely that the public is more aware of the impact of using the introduction of technology during the implementation of the program Merdeka to make it a medium to add to the marketing network for village products and to be able to establish communication interactions in cyberspace without making physical contact because this condition is not possible during the Covid-19 era. The existence of the communication network has built a social change in society to reduce unemployment and poverty caused by the active use of human resources. This is as stated by Harun & Ardianto [6] that development communication is intended to consciously increase human development. It means communication that will eradicate poverty, unemployment, and injustice.

Then for the impact on the economy, with the implementation of the program Merdeka, the village community can recognize and explore the potential of the village in improving community welfare, for example, introducing and developing local products in a One Village One product concept and technology in the production process. As well as the existence of tourism products that are developed to create economic value, one of them is by developing village souvenir products and packaged food and beverage products that are more attractive, for example, soy milk products and tomato candy from Luar Alas Village, honey products from Lamenta Village and Talwar keris product from Leseng Village. Based on the results of interviews and the distribution of questionnaires from 38 respondents consisting of 19 village heads and 19 community leaders, it was found that several things related to changes in 19 villages in carrying out village development innovations through a program Merdeka amid the Covid-19 period were as follows:

- a) In making changes to village innovation in the 19 assisted villages in Sumbawa Regency, a social mental change is needed, this aims to form village development that is stagnant and isolated from the development center towards a rural-based village development paradigm.

This is in line with what Zaini [17] said that to change the paradigm of development of underdeveloped areas which were previously based on the region to be based on the village (base on the village).

- b) The development of village innovation in 19 assisted villages in Sumbawa Regency development always involves various social, economic, cultural, and technological factors and all of these factors must always interact in the village development process. This is intended as an effort to create an advanced and independent village based on superior products. Because each village will produce and offer different changes according to the characteristics of the village. Discussion This research is in line with the words of Sitompul [14] which states that every development offers change, whose impact on one region to another may be different because the characteristics of one region are different from other regions
- c) The involvement of human resource factors and natural resources in developing villages is not enough to support the village development process in the 19 assisted villages in Sumbawa Regency. Therefore, village institutions are needed that utilize the potential of the two resources above in the form of community empowerment carried out by village institutions in collaboration with stakeholders. This aims to create village institutional development and the level of village community participation in improving the welfare of rural communities. The results of the discussion of this study are in line with Adisasmata [1] which states that rural community development is part of community development which is also directed to institutional development and community participation and empowerment in improving welfare in rural areas units.
- d) The management of rural resources in the 19 assisted villages in Sumbawa Regency should pay attention to the integration of economic and ecological perspectives, strengthen the dynamics of the local social economy, and understand the potential of rural resources. The discussion of this point is in line with what Baiquni [3] said that the dynamics of these social activities can have an economic impact on the population which plays an important role in increasing income as a first step in alleviating poverty.
- e) Integrating various potential sectors of the village in the village development process

because one of the other factors of the success of village development can be seen from the scouting between sectors in development and collaboration between stakeholders involved in the 19 assisted villages in Sumbawa Regency. This is as stated by Ernan Rustiadi [13] that the development of a region will stagnate if only one sector is developed.

- f) The arrangement of the rural economy in the 19 assisted villages in Sumbawa Regency needs to be carried out immediately by utilizing village resources optimally in a way that is by the conditions and needs of the community in achieving comprehensive and sustainable prosperity. Therefore, a strategic approach is needed, as for these approaches, namely: (a) Community needs in making changes and preventing unwanted things; and (b) Political will and capacity of the village government together with the community in implementing the programMerdekaa.
- g) An important solution that can encourage village innovation to build in 19 fostered villages in Sumbawa Regency during the Covid 19 pandemic is to develop entrepreneurship for village communities based on superior local products. The development of superior local products offers great opportunities for rural communities, especially village youths to become entrepreneurs and offers poverty reduction and employment development in the village. The findings of the discussion of this study are similar as stated by Ansari [2] that entrepreneurship is a strategy in the development and growth of community welfare, where resources and facilities are provided spontaneously by rural communities to lead to changes in rural socio-economic conditions.

From the seven points of establishing village development innovations during the Covid-19 period in the 19 assisted villages in Sumbawa Regency, they have formed significant changes in the 19 villages both socially, culturally, and economically. From a social point of view, it can be seen that the community in the 19 assisted villages can recognize the use of appropriate technology in the production process of superior village products and are familiar with online product marketing as well as increasing community participation in supporting the implementation of the program Merdeka in developing villages. In terms of culture, it can be seen that the community in 19 assisted villages in Sumbawa Regency has cultivated the use of local products and introduced

and marketed them on online media. And the last one for changes in the economy is changing in village characteristics from villages whose status is lagging, after the implementation of the program Merdeka, the village changes have been significant. From 19 fostered villages, there have been changes from underdeveloped villages to developed and

independent villages. This can be seen in the increase in the economy as measured by the level of income obtained after the development of One Village One product for six months. To see a comparison of the changes in the 19 assisted villages during the implementation of the program Merdeka, see the following figure:

Figure 4.2 Comparison of the Achievements of Village Innovation Achievements During the Program Merdeka.

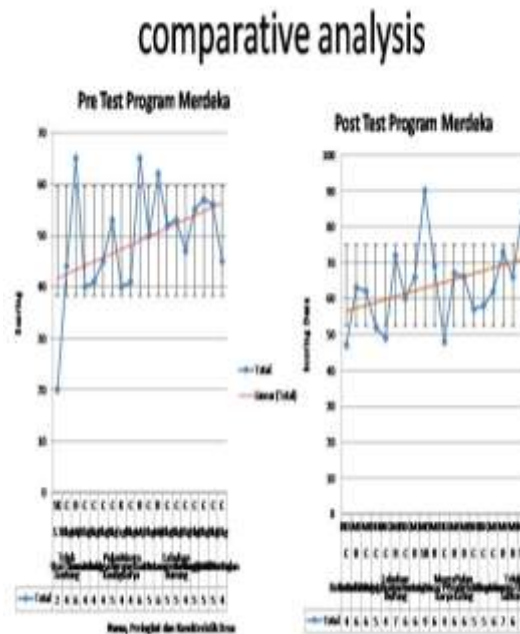


Figure 4.2 above shows that changes in the 19 assisted villages in Sumbawa Regency during the Covid-19 pandemic with the implementation of the program Merdeka based on the main indicators and looking at the derived indicators in the program Merdeka resulted in achievements in developing villages by introducing various innovations. Before the introduction of the concept of innovation in the 19 fostered villages, the condition of these villages was still lagging and developing, we can see from the graph on the left, it shows that one village experienced a backward village, 15 villages were still underdeveloped and the remaining 3 villages experienced moderate development. This is due to the potential of natural resources and village human resources in the 19 assisted villages in Sumbawa Regency that have not been optimally optimized and various innovations have not been introduced in advancing the village.

The implementation of the programMerdeka for approximately five months in

2020 shows a positive impact on village development, especially changes in economic, cultural, and social terms. This can be seen in the changes in the characteristics of villages that were previously underdeveloped and developing villages after the implementation of this program Merdeka, the changes in the 19 assisted villages to become developed and independent villages. The results of the study show that 17 villages have experienced progress, the remaining two villages have experienced independent villages. This is also due to the combination of natural resources, human resources, institutional resources, and stakeholders in it who are involved together. Then it is supported by the participation of the local village community who are serious about advancing their village.

V. CONCLUSION

- a. The realization of the main program targets for the program Merdeka which is reflected in the realization of the indicators for the

independence program targets has been running perfectly, only one main program for Merdeka needs to be an improvement in the next program Merdeka, namely the cultural village. This is because the new habit of introducing the concept of a building village will inevitably collide with the cultural customs of the local village community, therefore it takes a relatively long time to change and provide understanding to the village community about the concept of a building village with innovations, there is no need to worry. Will collide with the customs of the local village community.

- b. The Innovation of Villages to Build Independent amid the COVID-19 pandemic through the program Merdeka in 19 assisted villages in Sumbawa Regency brought a significant impact on social, economic, and village characteristics. In the social field, the community is more aware of the impact of the use of the introduction of technology during the implementation of the program Merdeka to make it a medium to add to the marketing network for village products and can establish communication interactions in cyberspace without making physical contact, because this condition is not possible during the Covid-19 era. The existence of this communication network has built a social change in society to reduce unemployment and poverty caused by the active use of human resources. Then for the impact on the economy, with the implementation of the program Merdeka, the village community can recognize and explore the potential of the village in improving Community welfare, for example, introducing and developing local products in a One Village One product concept and technology in the production process. As well as the existence of tourism products that are developed to create economic value, one of which is by developing souvenir products - typical village souvenirs and packaged food and beverage products that are more attractive. As well as changes in village characteristics, seen in villages that were previously underdeveloped and developing villages after the implementation of this program Merdeka, changes in the 19 assisted villages became developed and independent villages. The results of the study show that 17 villages have experienced progress, the remaining two villages have experienced independent villages. This is also due to the combination of natural resources, human resources, institutional resources, and

stakeholders involved in it jointly. Then it is supported by the participation of the local village community who are serious about advancing their village.

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